

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 283549

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

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TAGS: CASC (KIEDINGER, ROBERT E.)

SUBJECT: VIOLENT DEATH US SEAMAN ABOARD US VESSEL IN

ODESSA

REF: MOSCOW 19101; 19119

1. ON BASIS INFORMATION PROVIDED REFTELS, US JUSTICE DEPARTMENT BELIEVES THAT HENDRIX INDICTABLE FOR MURDER UNDER 18 U.S.C. 1111 RPT 18 U.S.C. 1111. DEPARTMENT CONCURS WITH EMBASSY THAT IT PREFERABLE FOR JURISDICTION BE EXERCISED BY USG RATHER THAN BY SOVIETS.

2. AS INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE PLEASE TELEGRAPH FURTHER DETAILS HOW CRIME OCCURRED AND CIRCUMSTANCES.

3. IF POSSIBLE, IT DEFINITELY PREFERABLE THAT HENDRIX REMAIN ON SHIP IN MASTER'S CUSTODY UNTIL ITS RETURN TO U.S. UNDERSTAND FROM OWNER CAPTAIN HARRY FISHER OF SEA TRANSPORT CORPORATION, NEW YORK, NEW YORK THAT EAGLE VOYAGER SCHEDULED TAKE TWENTY DAYS UNLOAD AT POTI AND THEN PICK UP AS YET UNIDENTIFIED HOMEWARD BOUND CARGOS IN MEDITERRANEAN. EXPECTED ETA IN U.S. LATE FEBRUARY.

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PAGE 02 STATE 283549

4. FISHER QUOTES CAPTAIN THOMAS AS WANTING HENDRIX REMOVED

FROM SHIP SOONEST. HOWEVER, STATE AND JUSTICE WILL DISCUSS FURTHER WITH COMPANY WHETHER CAPTAIN CAN BE PERSUADED CONTINUE TO ACCEPT CUSTODY OF HENDRIX UNTIL SHIP'S RETURN. PLEASE ADVISE WHAT WOULD BE SOVIETS' EXPECTED RESPONSE IF

HENDRIX WERE ALLOWED ASHORE FOR DIRECT TRANSIT TO U.S. IN CUSTODY U.S. MARSHAL. (DEPARTMENT WANTS AVOID THIS OPTION BECAUSE OF THE MANY POSSIBILITIES THAT HENDRIX MIGHT SEEK ESCAPE OR RESIST RETURN EXCEPT UNDER EXTRA-DICTION PROCEDURES).

5. CONOFF SHOULD VISIT SHIP SOONEST. DURING VISIT HE SHOULD OBTAIN AFFIDAVITS FROM CAPTAIN AND OTHER SHIP PERSONNEL WHO HAVE ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE EVENTS; SPECIFICALLY INCLUDING THOSE WHO REPORTEDLY HEARD HENDRIX ADMIT COMMISSION OF THE CRIME. CONOFF SHOULD ALSO IDENTIFY IN AFFIDAVIT FORM ALL ITEMS WHICH MIGHT BE USED AS EVIDENCE SUCH AS MURDER WEAPON AND BLOOD STAINED CLOTHING. DEPENDING ON ITEMS FOUND AND CONDITION, JUSTICE DEPARTMENT MAY WANT THEM TO BE RETURNED SOONEST TO U.S. VIA DIPLOMATIC POUCH. PENDING FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS, ITEMS SHOULD BE SEALED AND PLACED IN CAPTAIN'S CUSTODY.

6. GUIDANCE ON DISPOSITION OF REMAINS WILL BE SENT BY SEPTTEL. HOWEVER, PLEASE ADVISE WHETHER AUTOPSY COULD BE COMPLETED IN ODESSA AND WHETHER SHIP HAS ADEQUATE MEANS KEEP REMAINS ABOARD. SISCO

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